

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication in the Office Action of allowable subject matter in claims 6-12.

The title has been amended as required in the Office Action.

Proposed changes to Figs. 2, 5, 8, and 9 are submitted herewith to overcome the objection to the drawings.

Claims 1-14 have been canceled in favor of new claims 15-26, which better define the subject matter Applicants regard as the invention. Support for the features of claims 15-26 is provided in the original claims and the specification on page 11, lines 8-16.

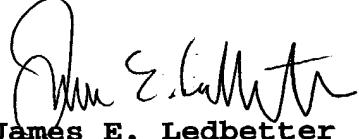
Claims 1, 2, 13, and 14 were rejected, under 35 USC §103(a), as being unpatentable over Westall et al. (US 6,718,161) in view of Kanemoto et al. (US 2002/0115466). Claim 3 was rejected, under 35 USC §103(a), as being unpatentable over Westall in view of Kanemoto and further in view of Scherzer et al. (US 2001/0031647). Claims 4 and 5 were rejected, under 35 USC §103(a), as being unpatentable over Westall in view of Kanemoto and further in view of Parkvall et al. (US 6,542,736). To the extent these rejections are deemed applicable to the claims supported by this application, Applicants respectfully traverse.

Kanemoto's effective date as a reference is its U.S. filing date of February 27, 2002. See MPEP 706.02(f)(1). The present application has a U.S. filing date of January 24, 2002 which antedates Kanemoto. Thus, Kanemoto is not prior art against the present application. Given that all prior art rejections rely on Kanemoto, all rejections are improper, and allowance of claims 15-26 is warranted.

In view of the above, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

If any issues remain which may best be resolved through a telephone communication, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JEL/DWW/att

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